



AWOnews



Produced by The Amateur Winemakers of Ontario

A forum for the exchange of news and opinions on home

winemaking in Ontario

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The 2003 Summer Edition

"Wine cheers the sad, revives the old, inspires the young, makes weariness forget his toil and fear her danger, opens a new world when this, the present, falls". Lord

Byron (d. 1824)

IN THIS ISSUE:

by Paul Dunseath



We welcome another contributor, "The Prudent Winemaker" (Sandy Burke), not to be confused with "The Thrifty Winemaker", although there's no reason why someone couldn't be both, with ideas on making sweet wines. And, although regrettably there was no Festival this year, the judging took place as scheduled, and with some impressive results. These are summarized in the following pages, along with some photos, courtesy of David Burns, of the judges and stewards as they made their way professionally through a near-record 694 entries.

In addition there is advance information on AWO 2004, to be held in Peterborough; even more advance information on AWO 2006, to be held in

Ottawa; and information, entry form and bottle label for the 2003 Eastern Ontario Amateur Wine Competition, still going strong and continuing to attract high-quality entries from across the province and beyond..

Please also read, and think about, the article on the AWO financial crunch.

2004 AWO FESTIVAL

Details are still being firmed-up at the moment, but this much is known for sure:

The date is Friday June 4, 2004 to Sunday June 6, 2004, specific times to be announced. The location is the Sir Sandford Fleming College in Peterborough Ontario.

The outline program is as follows:

Friday evening: Showcase of club wines

Saturday: seminars, blind tastings (pro - am), lunch, the Awards Banquet, at which Merit and Bronze prizes will be presented, and a social evening after the

banquet . Details should be available in the next few months and will be published in future editions of AWOnews when they have been completed.

Sunday morning will be the traditional Awards Brunch with presentation of Silver and Gold awards, and the announcement of Grand Champion Winemaker, Grand Champion Brewer, and Champion Club.

The organizers are working on "some interesting angles yet to be determined", so stay tuned.

2006 AWO FESTIVAL

No, that's not a mis-print. You can't start too early, and the organizing committee for the 2006 Festival in Ottawa has already started to meet. The Chair is Ralph Buttrum and the Sommelier, recent Canadian Grand Champion Mike Charlebois, has started the red wines for the convention and plans to begin the whites soon. Mervin and Carol Quast have been named as registrars for this convention, reprising the excellent job they did for AWO 2000.

2003 EOAWC COMPETITION AND BANQUET

The organizers of the 2003 Eastern Ontario Amateur Wine competition have announced that the competition and Awards Dinner will be held on Saturday, November 1, 2003 at the Centurion Conference & Event Centre, 170 Colonnade Road Ottawa, Ontario Canada.

The dinner, with complimentary wine, is open to members only. Annual Memberships in the EOAWC, one of the benefits of which is free admission to the Annual Dinner, cost \$45 per person. They can be purchased from Pat Griffith at ? 613-567- 4588. Membership applications will NOT be accepted at the door.

WINE ENTRIES FOR JUDGING

EOAWC membership is not required to enter a wine into the competition. The entry deadline for wine is October 15th, 2003 with the entry fee for each entry being \$3. Payment is required at the time of entry (Cash or cheque made out to

"EOAWC"). The judges' results will be announced first at the Banquet and then put on the EOAWC web site at

[http://members.rogers.com/eoawc/.](http://members.rogers.com/eoawc/)

A copy of the entry form is on page 7, along with a copy of the official bottle label. Each entrant may submit up to two entries in each class, provided they are different formulations; the letters A or B on the bottle label are to be circled to differentiate entries in the event that more than one is submitted in a class.

For the convenience of competitors, there are 5 bottle drop off points for entering wine into this competition. Drop-off points and contacts are as follows:

Jean Farrall 75 Springhurst Avenue Ottawa 613-238-2627

Morley O'Neil 47 Dunoon Place Kanata 613-836-4799

Larry Paterson 1325 Royal Drive Peterborough 705-743-4153

Marcel Sarazin 2539 Gravelle Crescent Blackburn Hamlet 824-3337

Reta Currie, Perth Brewing Co., Perth 613-264-1087

Each entry must have an official bottle label filled in and attached to the bottle

with Masking Tape. (It is important that ONLY masking tape be used to attach the label, as it facilitates preparing the wine for judging). For further information about the 2003 competition please see the website or contact Jean Farrall at ? 613-238-2627 or Morley O'Neil ? 613-836-4799. The organizers would like to thank the "Little Fat Wino's" site for providing more wine details about the EOAWC

REFLECTIONS IN A GLASS OF WINE **AFTER DINNER**

by Sandy Burke

Burlington Wine Guild

"The Prudent Winemaker."

The prudent winemaker is prepared to spend a little more than his frugal counterpart but he expects value for money and tries to avoid the pitfalls of diminishing returns, where mounting additional expenditures may only produce minimal improvements.

Two centuries ago sugar was an expensive luxury that the wealthy kept in special locked cabinets to avoid pilferage by the servants: so sayeth the Antique Road-show. At the same time, high proof alcohol was cheap and readily available. It is no wonder that Port and other fortified sweet after dinner wines came to be developed. The addition of alcohol in the early stages retained the natural grape sugar, creating a long-lived, luscious wine.

For most of us today the situation is reversed. Sugars such as sucrose and dextrose are cheap and readily available while the alcohol available locally is over priced and so diluted that for every liter added only 400 cc is alcohol, the rest being water.

I like to finish my dinner most days with a sweeter, heavier wine, an after dinner or a dessert, but never both, and I suspect this is how it is for most people. So what is a prudent winemaker to do? Why, concentrate on rich dessert wines of course.

By feeding with dextrose, a reasonably high level can be attained and the addition of a sweet reserve at the final stage of sweetening now becomes reasonable as the small reduction in alcohol is no longer important when making

a dessert wine rather than an after dinner.

Worth considering as bases for such wines are elderberry (think thrifty/frugal) and muscat (think Samoa). Last year I made such a wine from Ontario Cabernet Franc grapes and entered it in our club competition as a dessert wine and also in the after dinner class (with fortification}. In both cases they fell just short of a Bronze but the faults of insufficient sweetness and more ageing are easily remedied and this year I will try it with Merlot including a sweet reserve so I feel I am on the right track for pleasant end of meal drinking at reasonable cost.

AWO 2003 COMPETITION

As noted earlier, while there was no Festival this year, the competition took place as usual. Of the 694 entries, 368 were awarded medals, and a further 52 were awarded Merit status; that is, in the "middle three judges" scoring system, the wine did not meet overall the point score for a medal, but at least one of the judges had scored it as a medal-quality wine.

In overall terms, the medals broke down as follows:

GOLD: 43, SILVER: 119, and BRONZE: 206

Specific awards were as follows:

GRAND CHAMPION CLUB

K-W Winemakers Guild - 1996 points

GRAND CHAMPION WINEMAKER

John Tummon K-W Winemakers Guild - 818 points

GRAND CHAMPION BREWER

Glen Graham, St. Thomas Grapebusters – 374 points

GRAND CHAMPION CIDERMAKER

John Tummon K-W Winemakers Guild - 100 points

BEST RED TABLE WINE

Carl Feairs Brampton Winemakers

’99 Cabernet - Funk

BEST WHITE TABLE WINE

John Tummon K-W Winemakers Guild

’98 Chardonnay - Seeger

BEST BREW IN SHOW

Glen Graham, St. Thomas Grapebusters

Ontario Grape Growers Marketing Board

ONTARIO RED TABLE WINE

Carl Feairs Brampton Winemakers

’99 Cabernet - Funk

ONTARIO WHITE TABLE WINE

John Tummon K-W Winemakers Guild

’98 Chardonnay - Seeger

FRAN ARTHURS TROPHY

BEST WHITE WINE FROM CONCENTRATE/KIT

Bill Thornton, St. Thomas Grapebusters

"BUZZ" ARTHURS TROPHY**BEST RED WINE FROM CONCENTRATE/KIT**

Brian Williams, Niagara Vine to Wine Circle

While space does not permit a complete list of all award winners (these are available in any event from club reps), we would like to pay special tribute to those who achieved the pinnacle in their respective categories, the coveted GOLD MEDAL. They are as follows:

Aperitif - Dry - Sherry: Pat McPhail

Sweet Aperitif: Terry Rayner

Chardonnay: Jack Broadbent, John Tummon

Riesling: Steve Kampers, Steve Skelly, Bob Stalder, Bill Thornton

White Hybrid: Steve Skelly

Other White: Gary Frankow, Steve Kampers, Chris Kraemer, André Tallieu

Cabernet Family: Carl Feairs, Gary Koestler, John Peters, Roman

Prydatkewycz

Pinot/Gamay: Steve Kampers

Red Hybrids: Terry Rayner

Other Red: Tom Ostler

Red Blend: Brian Douglas, Larry Paterson

Dessert: Bruce Drewitt, Jim Fisher, Keith Harmer

Icewine Style: Don Innes, John Tummon

After Dinner: Bruce Drewitt, Jim Lloyd, Terry Rayner

Sparkling: Dennis Henry, John Tummon

Social: Robert Engel, Dave Powell

Country: Peter Bennell, Vince Cortese, Steve Skelly

Cider: Bill Thornton, John Tummon

Dark Beer: Glen Graham

Stout: Glen Graham

Mead: Peter Bennell

Red from Concentrate: Brian Williams

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

by Glenn Keown

I want to start my message by congratulating everyone who won medals at this year's Ontario Judging. There was a significant increase in the number of medals awarded, which shows that the Amateur Winemaker is producing excellent wines.

The Ontario Judging in May had a total of 694 wines and beers entered and 368 medals were awarded. I must commend the Wine Judges Commission for a job well done. This was a busy weekend for everyone involved. I want to thank all who volunteered and worked so hard to get this accomplished. I for one was happy to get home on Sunday afternoon and sit down to relax.

A great deal of planning went into this year's competition, which led to new changes and a more streamlined event. To the Chief Steward and his committee,

who worked full-out all weekend and are still working hard at getting things organized for the Canadian finals, thank you. For those who won medals this year, you will be receiving them shortly, along with your certificates.

During the weekend events at Brock University, a gentlemen who we all know as Fred Passmore, announced that this would be his last year as an active Amateur Wine Judge. I was surprised to hear that Fred had been judging wines for the past thirty years. We should all applaud him for his dedication to Amateur Winemakers and also the Judges Commission. We wish him many more years of good health and hope to see him at all our future events.

Another familiar face that has decided to sit down and relax for a while, is Dan Ostler. Dan has dedicated many years to the AWO and we all owe him a great deal of thanks for his time and dedication. Taking over from Dan as Archivist is Larry Paterson, known to most of us as "Littlefatwino". Welcome aboard Larry.

The Annual General Meeting took place on June 21st, in Mississauga. I was pleased that some members did show up and offer support to your executive.

The minutes from the meeting will be sent to all the Club Reps and added to our website shortly. There were no real changes in your current executive, except for

the change in the role of Archivist, which I mentioned above.

At this meeting an interesting point came to light and that was the cost of mailing for the AWO Newsletter. It appears that we need to cut down on our expenses and sending the newsletter by e-mail would be a good start. To those who don't have computers, we will continue to send your newsletter in the normal fashion. I would ask all club reps when submitting club dues for next year (2004), to make sure we have each members updated information. I know over the past year, or so, some members have changed their home address as well as their e-mail address. If we can keep all records updated, it will make things easier for us. This will ensure you also receive your copy of the WineMaker magazine on time.

Notification for annual dues will be forwarded to club reps shortly and I would ask that each club respond as quickly as possible. Next years Convention (2004) will be held in Peterborough, Ontario, June 4-5-6th. Further information will follow, as it becomes available.

THE AWO CASH CRUNCH

It would appear that AWO is facing a financial crunch and some hard decisions will have to be made about fees, awards and related matters. In brief, expenses this year exceeded income by some \$9000, and another year with similar results could mean that AWO had no funds to continue.

This results in part from some of our historic roots. In the early days, there was no insurance for club events or Festivals, no website, our publication costs were lower, and there were perhaps a dozen classes in the competition, with only three medals awarded per class for FIRST, SECOND and THIRD. Judging took place during the course of one day in Toronto and no judge - even if he/she had to stay overnight because of their distance from Ottawa - was provided with accommodation, meaning that these usually had to pay for a hotel room from their own pocket. Judging took place in a Community Centre using available rental glasses, and judges and stewards were only provided with a sandwich lunch and salad-and-cold-cuts snack after judging. Then, as now, no judges were compensated for travel expenses.

Since then a number of things have happened. The Eastern Ontario Amateur

Wine Competition pioneered the use of GOLD, SILVER and BRONZE medals in 1986 and, based on the obvious superiority of this system to one of FIRST, SECOND and THIRD in terms of identifying quality, it was adopted by AWO about ten years ago, along with multiple medal awards in any class meriting it. While EOAWC does not use actual medals, but only medal certificates, we use both, with the result that our usage of medals has increased from in the (estimated) 40-per-year range to 368 this year. The cost of this alone, over \$5600 this year, is not covered by the entry fee. That fee almost, but doesn't quite, cover the cost of running the competition itself.

Due to the expansion in classes, and the admission of multiple entries per class, the number of entries has more than doubled. This has turned the judging into a (very busy) two-day affair, with the consequent need for weekend accommodation and meals for judges and stewards who do not live in the area, and a commercial/academic location able to accommodate the number of entries. (It should be noted that judges are still NOT compensated for their travel and out-of-pocket expenses, and for those more distant from Niagara that can mean as much as \$75 each out-of-pocket for the privilege of giving up their weekend to judge). The bottom line is that the competition entry fees pay only about

one-third of the actual costs.

Other expenses of operating the organization, including such necessities as publications including the new member benefit of the valued WineMaker magazine (which are subsidized, in effect), insurance, the website, telephone etc., cost about twice as much as the membership fees provide.

There are a couple of alternatives. One is to leave things as they are and make up the shortfall by doubling membership fees and increasing the bottle entry fee from \$5 to \$15 (while this sounds excessive, it is in line with other competitions such as US State Fairs). Alternatively we could drop the award of actual medals and just use medal certificates (when is the last time you showed yours off to someone after a Festival?) with a much more modest increase in membership and entry fees. While this would have to be worked out in detail, it might involve something like an increase in membership fees by 50% and an increase in bottle entry fees from \$5 to \$10. This would have both memberships and bottle fees at least cover their own share of the expenses, neither of which are doing now.

Please discuss in your club and let the Executive know your views and

suggestions.